

A MOST significant memorial exhibition of the porcelains of the late Adelaide Alsop-Robineau was recently held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Mr. Joseph Breck in the *Museum Bulletin* says of her work "that it is a masterpiece of which any ceramist of any age or any country might well be proud." What greater

inspiration can the artist readers of DESIGN have than the unique achievements of this great artist—its founder and guiding spirit? The basis of Art is life itself; life means growth and growth certainly was the dominant note of Mrs. Robineau's career. Back in the early nineties she was a teacher in the middle west, in 1899 when she founded *Keramic Studio* she was a well-known china decorator in New York City. But that was not enough for this creative genius. She started to study through the columns of the Magazine the art of porcelain and in this way worked hard and long. She tried, experimented, failed again and again and finally achieved phenomenal success and a position of "Leader in ceramic arts." The impetus she has given the so-called "minor arts" in America is immeasurable and her message to her followers has always been to grow, to adjust themselves to new problems. As editor of DESIGN she led the publication through the difficult period of the World War and from a time when tastes were decidedly Victorian to the present period when our arts are completely changed in keeping with the new rhythms and expressions of the age. Shall we not try to follow the example of this great teacher and grow as we know she would have us do?

♦ ♦ ♦

Our thanks go out to the many hundreds of subscribers who gave their attention to our classification blanks and questionnaires. The large percentage of returns suggest that the possibilities for mutual help may be very great in the future. The decorative arts, as we know, are in a decided state of adjustment. On all sides since "Les Arts Decoratifs" of Paris in 1925 similar exhibitions in leading museums gives us food for thought. "Do you think modern art will last?" we are asked from all sides. And the farseeing designer knows that it is not a style but a real movement and growth.

Certainly the rhythms of this century with its unprecedented achievements in science and industry must produce an art different in design than that of the "gay nineties." This change now produces new needs and we face, again, the problem of meeting these with new types of decoration and construction.

See what has happened in the case of the skyscraper and the automobile and aeroplane. There are many more jobs for the designer to attack. For example, there is furniture,

clothing, the theatre and the home. In regard to the latter, Le Corbusier, the French architect, says, "we have not yet even stated the problem."

Too often the attitude of the designer has been that of inertia. He has sat quietly and repeated too many times what has been done over and over again. So when we found through our questionnaires that the dominant interest to readers of DESIGN was New Movements in Design, there was a strong feeling to shout "Bravo"! We learned also that there is a great interest in design in its relation to the crafts or industrial arts, as well as problems in designs for the class room. All of which centers about the one big idea of growing with the times. In regard to china decoration, we find that the craftsmen doing that work approve of the wide range of material which cover our pages each month. Through the adaptation of this, greater interest and variety has been produced in their design and color.

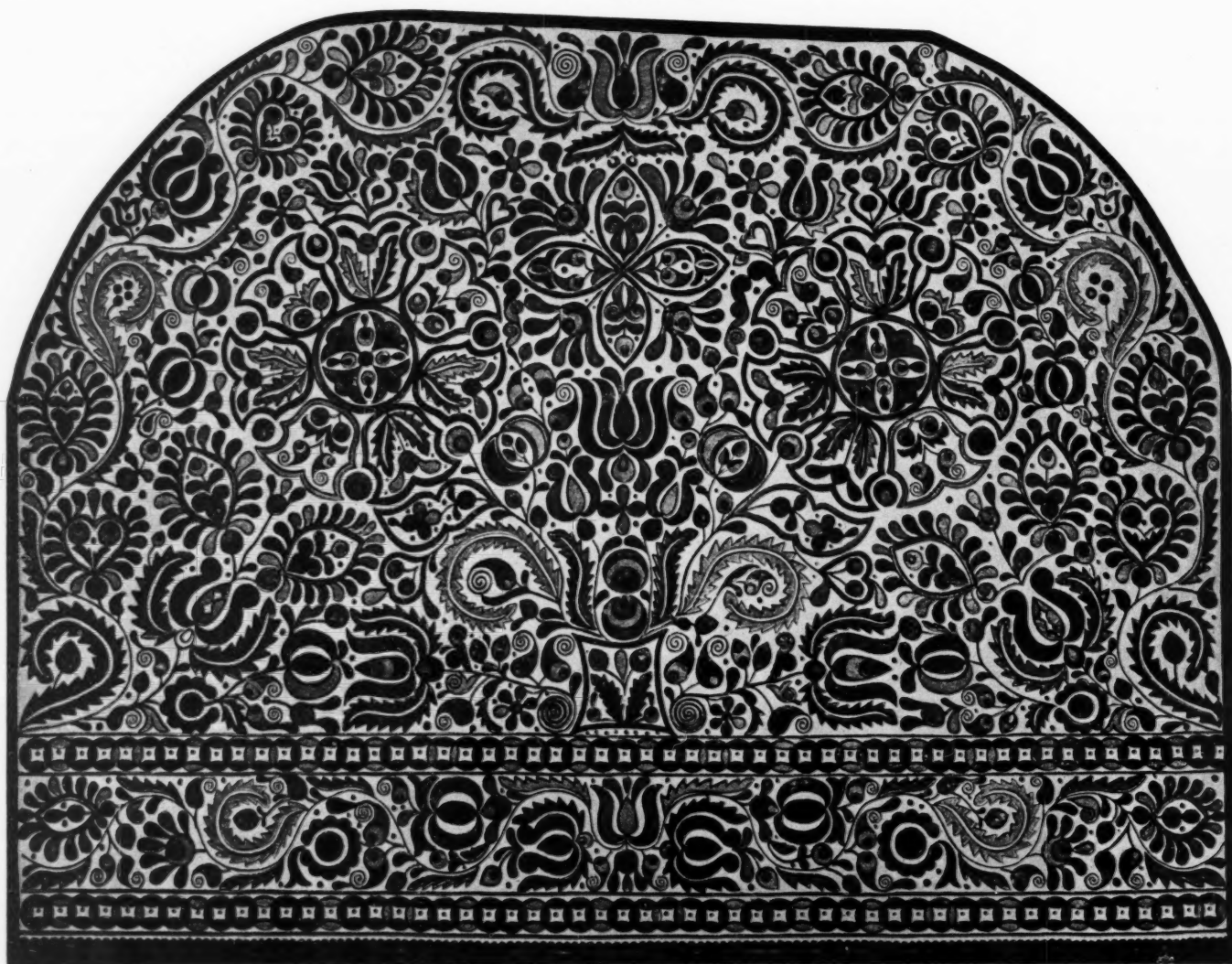
Naturally now that we have progressed to this point with our readers we cannot but take them into our confidence and tell them what we are planning for the near future. First of all—The May issue of DESIGN, which introduces our thirty-second volume, will appear in a new dress, gay in color and design, larger in size, still richer in material. We have just published

our own *Decorative Arts Collection* which was planned in every way to bring the greatest help to teachers and designers. And in accord with this great interest in the influence of primitive and peasant peoples on the new design of our day we will publish, in addition to this Czechoslovakian number, others devoted to such forces as Primitive African design, also American Indian design.

Felix Payant



The Funerary Urn of Mrs. Robineau which she made before her death

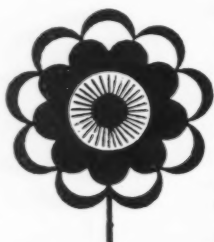


Part of Painted Fireplace in Cataj

## THE POPULAR ARCHITECTURE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*Photographs reproduced from Vytvarna prace lidu nascho by Dusan Jurkovic*

*Lida Matulka*



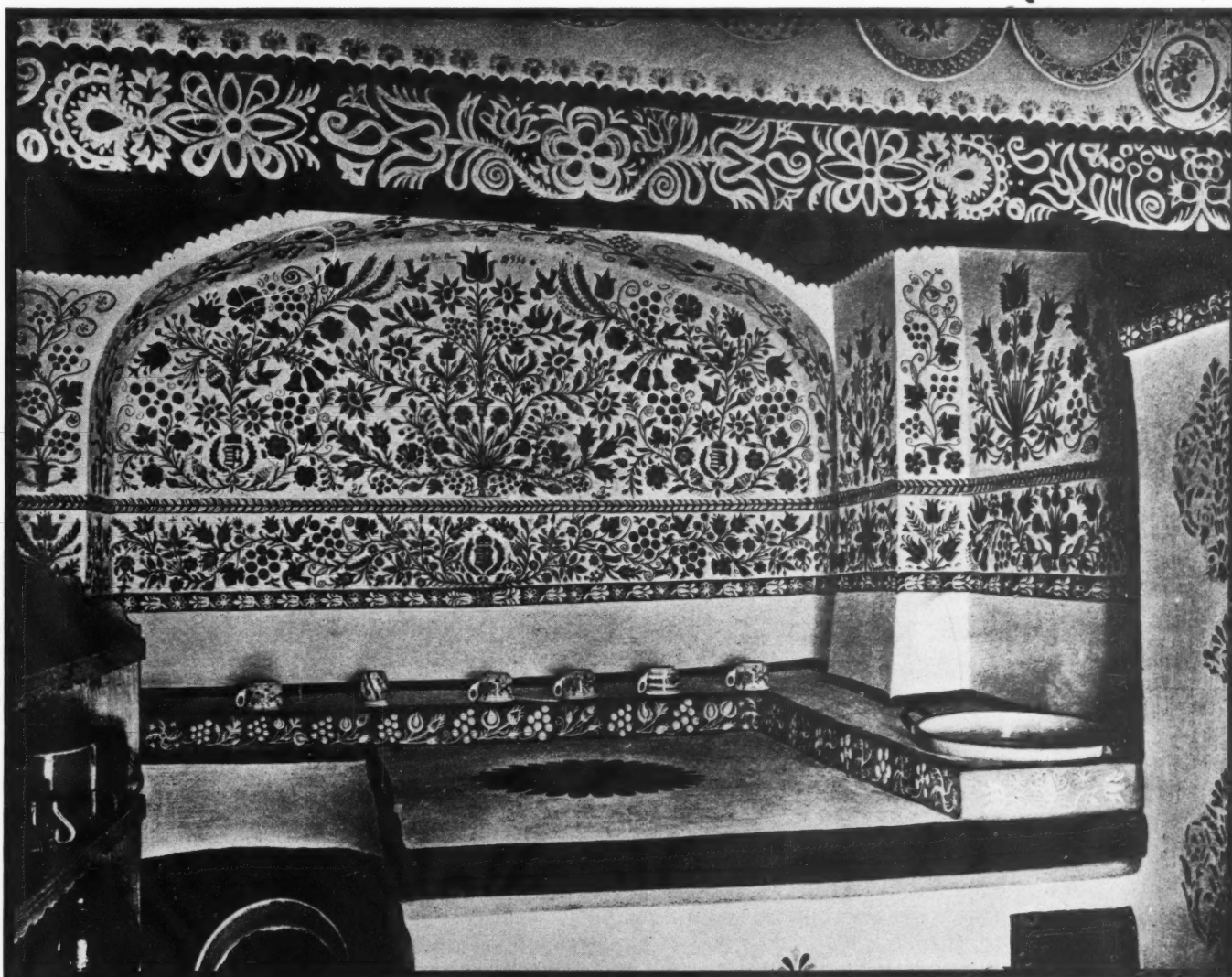
THE most characteristic popular architecture today is to be found in the peasant buildings, principally in Eastern Moravia and in Slovakia. In Bohemia we do, occasionally, come upon the primitive little hut of a mountaineer, or the one-storied wooden houses at Turnov, or again the peasant homesteads of brick on the plains bordering the River Elbe, whose baroque or empire facades are merely an echo of the nobles' castle. The popular art which is found near the cities is scarcely representative, for it has there undergone the influence of commercialism. It is therefore necessary to go far from the centers of industry to find the really artistic work of popular inspiration.

Most of the other examples of popular art have died off in Bohemia, and remains of it are preserved only in the Ethnographical Museum of Prague, or in private collections. Nevertheless we can still find, in the mountain regions, beautiful specimens of one-storied wooden buildings with richly carved balconies uppermost. Thus Jilemnice and

and Zelezny Brod, Semily, and other vicinities are well known for this kind of building.

The remoteness of the villages of Slovakia and Eastern Moravia from the centers of culture, and the natural inclination of the peasants to adhere to the ancient, inherited traditions, have preserved for us in these localities beautiful examples of popular art and architecture. In Slovakia the same tendency prevails; we find that the more distant the hamlet, the more simple the inhabitants, and the more religiously they look upon the heritage of their forefathers. Yet perhaps even this devout veneration of ancestral customs will not prevail much longer, for modern youth, even in the most remote villages, is attracted to a newer age. For example, in the village of Turjepole, about eight hours distant from the nearest railroad station, one of the most unusually talented Slovak women showed us about twenty exquisitely embroidered costumes which she had been embroidering all her life for her daughter. With tears in her eyes she confided to us that her daughter will never wear them, for her husband is not a Slovak. In this same cottage I noticed that, although the floor of the room was only of





Painted Fireplace in Svanbach

clay, stamped to make it level, and all the furniture was ornamented with carvings, nevertheless, beside an ancient chest with valuable decorations, there stood a Singer sewing machine; beside the painted pitchers hanging on the wall there stood a modern clock, and even a gramophone. Of course this is exceptional in the rural districts of Slovakia, yet it offers an incontestable proof of changing fashions.

Elsewhere, again, for example in Cicmany, a village also about twenty-five miles from the railroad station, we had occasion, in the year 1921, to admire not only the houses which were constructed and painted in an unusual way, but also the costumes and embroidery. Almost the whole village has burned down since then. A similar fate overtook Cataj where beautiful painted fireplaces, such as the one represented in the accompanying illustration, are to be found. In the same way in other parts of Slovakia the examples of popular art have gradually been disappearing.

The popular architecture of Eastern Moravia and Slovakia indicates very obviously that it is the work of a peasant architect, who distinguishes himself by his remarkable ability of choosing a technique suitable for the material with which he works. Thus one finds the same spirit and the same kind of ornament, on a carved or painted wooden

cottage as on the painting of the walls of a brick house. In the mountains, where the inhabitants are dependent on wood, we find these houses also of wood, constructed on stone foundations, while even the logs are joined by wooden spikes. Such a cottage consists of a large front room, a back room with a fireplace, and a chamber. Its roof is either of shingles or thatched. All decorations are reduced to an ornamental wooden gable and a carved chimney, also of wood. The spaces between the logs are filled in with clay,—either whitened or colored. The more expensive buildings have balconies with ornamented pillars. Some times in the gable is built a little room with a balcony, while above it is built a semi-circular projecting shed.

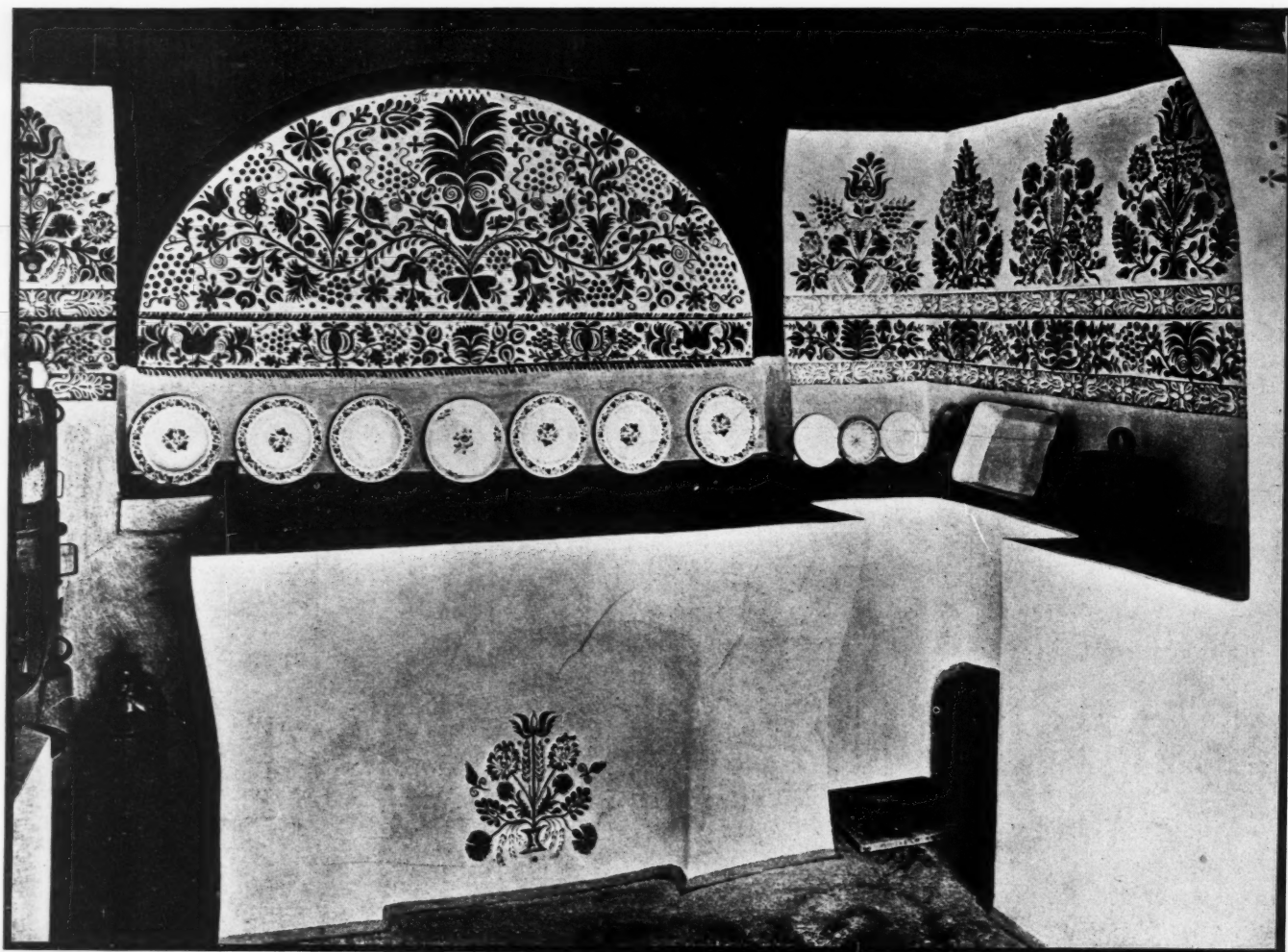
In Cicmany, we find an unusual kind of log house, one story in height, with the exterior painted with a primitive, geometrical ornament. This kind of painting with calamine, found at the corners, around the windows and on the clay fillings, between the logs, probably serves to conceal the coarseness of the material of which the house is made, while at the same time it affords the house a gayer and more pleasing appearance. As a result, this simple style of painting allows the dark surface of the logs to stand out, and lends it a strangely quaint tonality.

Among the examples of wooden architecture in Slovakia,

we should also include the little wooden churches,—the style, simple execution, and choice of materials of which, again point out a peasant architect as their creator. We visited some of these churches, often having to go far to reach them, but never did we regret our journey. The effect was always surprising. We marvelled at how a peasant architect,—who had no other experience in building, than simple peasant houses, could succeed, in spite of the material he used, and the simplicity of his style, in creating so

we might find an hour-glass which symbolizes, when the sand has sifted out, the end of the life span. Another interesting development of peasant architecture is the little shrine, originally called "the Passion of Christ," usually situated at crossroads or in the midst of the fields. These shrines contain a crucifix or a picture representing either a scene from the life of Christ or a picture of the Virgin.

However, almost everywhere in those districts where wooden architecture prevails, we find less brilliant colors,



Painted Fireplace in Svanbach

solemn, monumental and grandiose an impression, as if we actually stood in a cathedral.

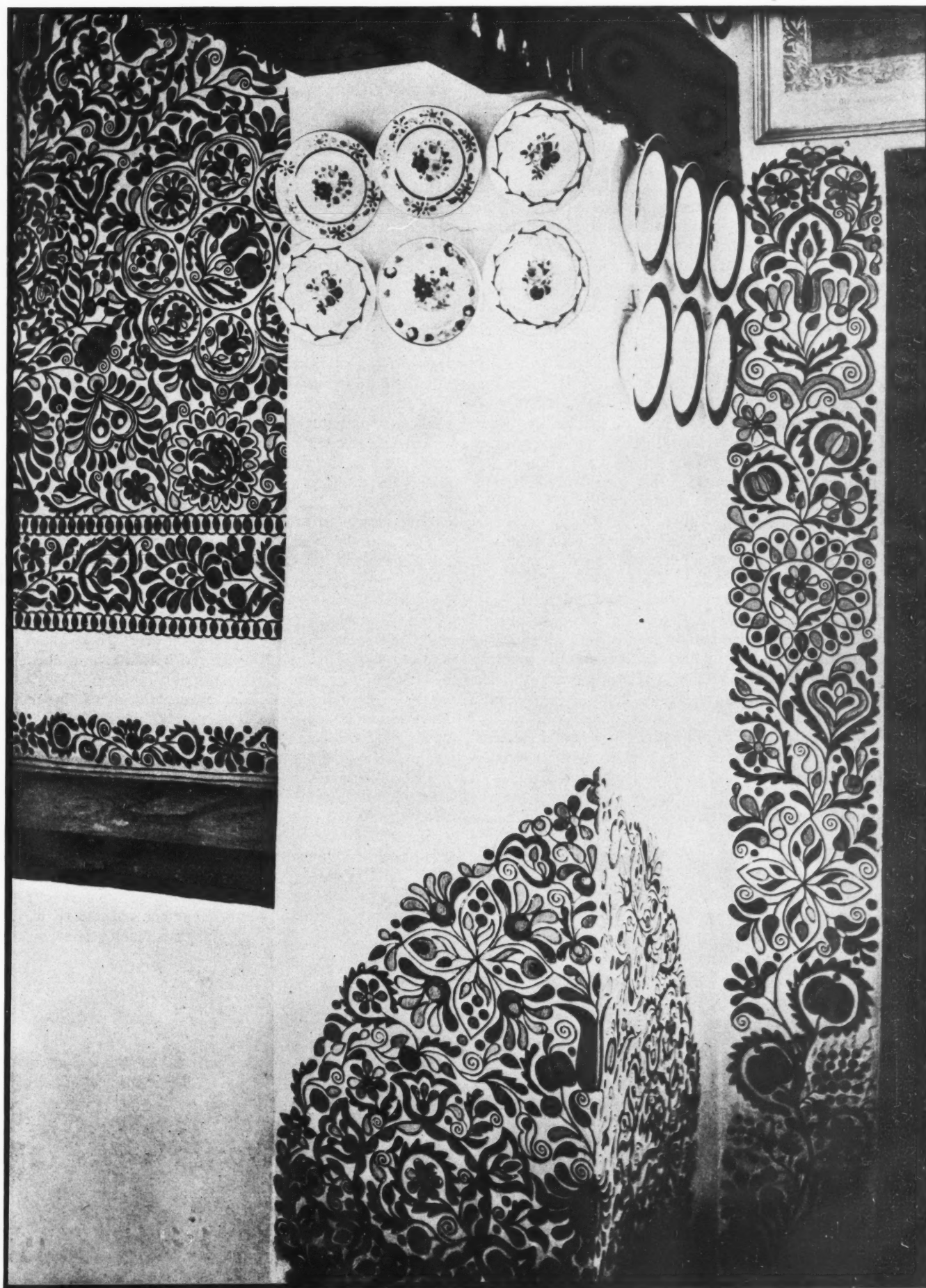
Some churches have interiors covered with paintings as, for example, the little church in Zabreží, of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The boards of the ceiling are richly ornamented with paintings of flowers and apple motifs. In the decorations themselves, we may easily follow the evolution of designs from the late Gothic period and the Renaissance to the complicated and colorful modern flower ornaments.

Still another development of wooden architecture is found in the Slovak cemetery, usually on a nearby hill among the trees. Even there humble piety finds artistic expression in the crosses and tombs on which are carved or painted flower ornaments, or symbolic scenes from the life of the deceased. Thus we may find painted the sun, the moon, or the stars, all of which represent eternity or else

while in the ornaments the colors that predominate are black and red, although sometimes blue and yellow are used. The ornaments here are usually only geometrical, the same that had been used for generations. On the other hand, in the wealthier districts of Eastern Moravia and Slovakia, chiefly around Bratislava, we were astonished at the far greater delight the people took in beautifully decorated dwellings, in colorful paintings, in the gay ceramics that hung along the wall, and in the exquisite embroideries and costumes. In this connection, we may recall that the famous French critic, Camille Mauclair has written: "The Slovak popular art recalls at the same time the Byzantine and Arabic art, the medieval Gothic traditions, and the most modern motives of the new school."

When he wrote this, he must have had in mind the differences between the costumes of the Northeast and those of the Southwest. Not that they differ in cut from village





A portion of a painted Ante-room and Fireplace in Cataj

to village, but they do differ in the spirit of the decoration. Of course, the appearance and colors of a particular district is one of the principal causes of these differences, for the Slovak, peasant-artist is inspired chiefly by nature. It is evident that a sunny, colorful landscape with bright fields of grain is apt to suggest ornaments rich in color, and such are also the mural decorations of the houses. I shall not discuss at length the way in which the buildings are constructed.

The most common sort of house in Southeastern part of Moravia and the Southwestern part of Slovakia is low. One enters the ante-room, which also serves as the kitchen, at the back of which is a fireplace set into an alcove; in the front of the house is the principal room, while at the back is another room and a chamber. The principal room is the most interesting of all. In one corner, usually to the left, is a huge stove heated from the kitchen. On one side of the door is a large painted chest which sometimes serves as a seat as well. Long benches with painted backs, run along the whole length of one side of the room. In the principal corner is usually a carved table, with occasionally a chair or two. Above the table is a shelf on which there are painted dishes, and from which there hang ornamented pitchers. On another side of the room there may be one or two painted beds, and more rarely a sort of open cupboard in which painted dishes are displayed.

The artistic taste with which the house is decorated with paintings is remarkable. The richest ornamentation is to be found in the stoop of the house, the principal room, described above, and the kitchen. Usually in the principal room there hang many ornamented plates and pitchers,—sometimes as many as a hundred of them hang in a single room. In the corner there usually stands the bed, reaching up to the ceiling with the number of featherbeds that are placed one above the other, so that, with the other furniture, there remains but little space for decoration, only around the windows, or the ceiling.

The stoop, (*zurdo* as it is called) is a sort of little projecting enclosure built before the door in order to protect it from the rain. What makes this stoop remarkable, and affords the house a beautiful, fresh appearance, is the artistic flower decoration painted on it. If we consider how skillfully, on the varied surfaces of the "stoop," such a artist succeeded in dividing all the ornaments in their respective places, and calculating how to decorate harmoniously the whole surface to be painted, we must realize that only a woman of real artistic talent could decorate a stoop so aesthetically. For wherever we inquired about

the artist, we were told that it was a simple peasant woman, and occasionally we were presented to her. Sometimes, indeed, there were several women who did such painting in the village, but they were all usually of one family. Most commonly there was only one woman artist who executed these paintings for a whole village. However, in all cases she showed herself a real artist. Without making trial sketches, she was able to divide the surface and fill the spaces to be ornamented with remarkable artistry. Whether she chose as her central motif a geometrical design or an ornamental flower pattern, all the decorations of other surfaces, whether little side pillars or niches, were adapted to the whole composition.

The most common motifs used are the curling stems of climbing plants, from which there are represented as springing flowers, stems with their fruit, usually apples or clusters of grapes, and the most diversified plant motifs harmoniously placed. The most popular flower motifs are those of the rose, carnation, tulip and bell flower. Similar admiration is aroused by the painted backs of the fireplaces. In Cataj, in Svanbach, etc., the specimens of these decorations prove that the symmetry of the various parts into which the painted surface is divided, and the harmonious juxtaposition of colors, are almost classic in their perfection. The principal decorative motif here is also a sort of flower cluster. If one examines the accompanying illustration of a painted fireplace in Svanbach, he will notice that the basic division of the plane is entirely regular: an ornamental row of climbing plants on three sides of the fireplace; on the sides are found harmoniously combined bouquets, and above a semi-circular plane is filled with similar flower motifs. The sprouting of stems and flowers, and the intertwining of branches is everywhere successful, and the whole bouquet is composed with a remarkable sense of rhythm.

More exceptional still is the decoration of the painted fireplace in Cataj. The fundamental motifs are here the same, only the combination and circular forms, as well as the spiral strips are new. Only a woman of an unusually artistic temperament could have created this composition and color harmony. The fundamental color is white, while yellow predominates, but is well balanced with red in the shaded parts. The edgings around the individual motifs are orange in color. The painter of Cataj, an elderly lady, who had also painted a fireplace for the Czechoslovak exhibition of popular art in Paris as well as for several of her acquaintances, explained to us how she painted them. She makes her own brushes in a primitive fashion from bristles;



Decorated Easter Eggs



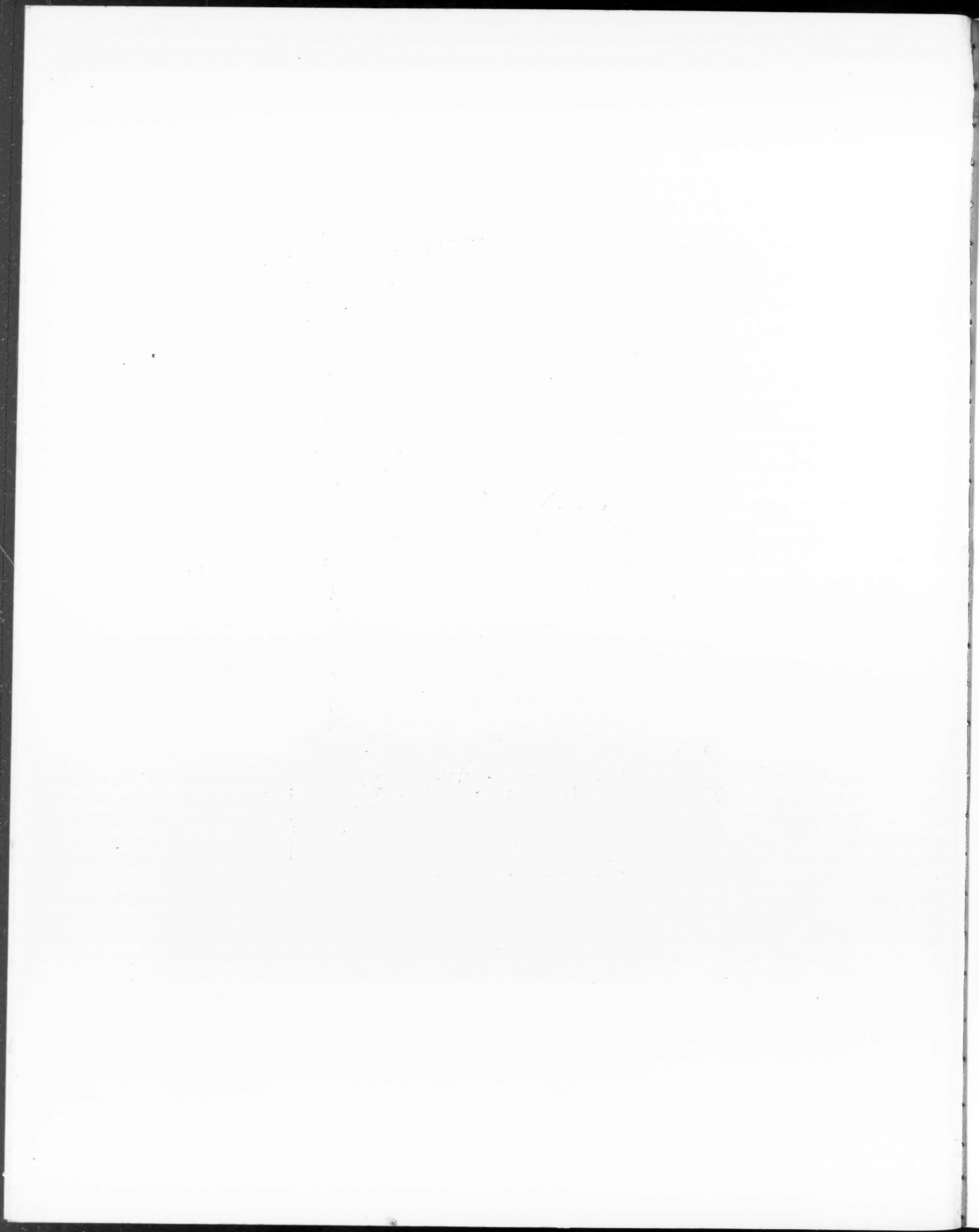


*Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum*

CZECKOSLOVAKIAN PAINTED CHEST  
HABAN POTTERY  
TEXTILES

FEBRUARY, 1930  
SUPPLEMENT TO  
DESIGN

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SYRACUSE, N. Y.





she divides the surface to be painted with a little stick, outlines the main divisions by hand; and then, with charcoal, fills in the surface, nowadays with aniline colors, though formerly with natural colors. She whitewashes the walls around the paintings as often as twice a year, and if necessary, she retouches the design. If one marvels that the peasants have such beautiful paintings around the fireplaces, she explains that in summer people do not cook there, and that if necessary, they paint new ones.

When one hears the peasant artist speak so simply of her creation, one wonders why there should be so many questions and disputes as to the foreign influence and the symbolic significance of the ornaments of the Czechoslovak popular art. There is one opinion according to which, through the influence of the Oriental and especially Persian motifs, there was introduced a symbolic meaning. Thus often the Oriental meaning persists in the transformed Czechoslovak motifs. For example, the palm represents the tree of life; the mystic rose is the emblem of life and death; roosters are considered guardians of the night, grapes represent plenty and joy of life, etc. One of the best authorities on popular art, Frantisek Kretz, rather opposes the view that the decorations are symbolical. He says: "Often symbolism is looked upon erroneously as the basis of the national designs. If the ornaments have their origin in subjects derived from nature, such motifs are used instinctively as artistic elements and not at all because of an emotional reaction." This perhaps, also explains why we so often vainly inquire into the meaning of Czechoslovak peasant ornaments, be they geometric or flower.

Another disputed question is how and where the designs

and motifs originated. Some believe that their origin is Czech,—since from very ancient times the Czech have used similar forms and motifs,—chiefly apples, carnations and tulips. J. Koula, an excellent connoisseur of popular ornaments, rather inclines to believe that the designs show Oriental influence,—chiefly that of the Persian and Arabic majolica and of the Oriental weaving, all of which were introduced into Slovakia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Turkish invaders.

That the Turks at that time already decorated their saddles and blankets with ornaments representing apples and tulips is proven by the beautiful examples preserved in the Museum of Vienna. Slovak women captured by the Turks and kept in their camps probably learned this kind of embroidering, and brought this knowledge back with them when they returned to their homes. Additional proof of the Oriental origin of the designs is furnished by the various terms employed in the technique of embroidery. For example, in Detva, the phrase "holes after the Turkish fashion," is still current; moreover, it is purely Persian, with a "bent needle." Such embroidering with a hook is unknown in Western Europe. Partly, however, the Oriental influence was introduced by the Croats who settled in the vicinity of Bratislava and southern Moravia. The Slovakian peasant-artist has an exceptional innate talent for selecting the appropriate technique and color scheme for any given material; he is able to create new ornaments spontaneously, and beautify everything about him. This also, Camille Mauclair has understood well when he says: "The Slovak is a born colorist who enlivens and beautifies

*(Continued on Page 169)*



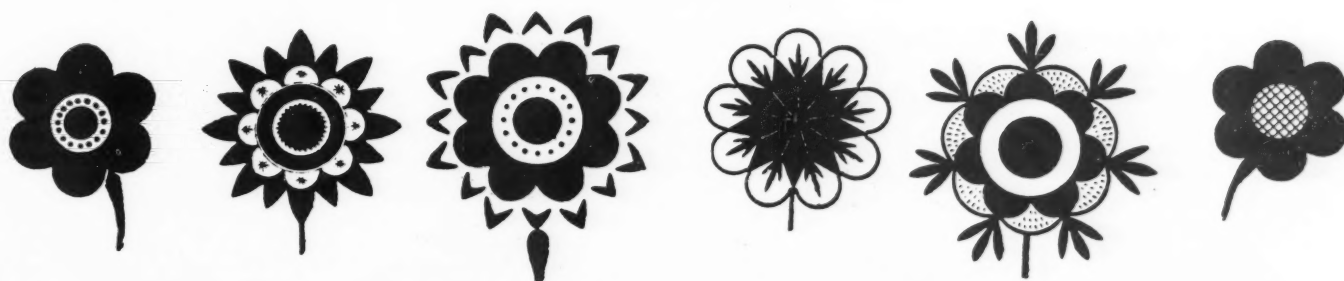
Chest showing the excellent features of fine spacing and suitability of applied design



Painting on glass a typical form of art expression in Czechoslovakia

Courtesy Brooklyn Museum





## PAINTINGS ON GLASS

*Lida Matulka*

AMONG the beautiful examples of peasant art we should include painting on glass. This art is not, however, very ancient, for the oldest pictures of popular origin which we possess were painted under the influence of the Baroque and Empire styles. Not that the Slovak peasants invented painting on glass, for such an industry had existed for a long time, and had reached perfection in Germany in the Middle Ages. The peasant artists of Slovakia merely adopted the art as they found it, but contributed their own form and style of decoration, and thus gave a tonality of their own to the oil painting on glass which they produced.

In Slovakia such paintings were of three different origins: those painted by peasant artists, both men and women, in glass workshops; secondly, those produced by the monks who painted religious scenes, saints, etc., and finally those by individual peasant artists, men and women, who also painted ceramics. It is the third class that interests us most, since it is the only one of real popular origin. Paintings of this last group indicate a technique similar to that found on the jugs from Boleráz and Dobrá Voda. It usually consists of a rich flower design bordering the figure of the Virgin or some saint. Sometimes it represents a scene from the legendary past of Slovakia, as for example, some episode from the life of Janosik, a sort of robber-hero, a character, somewhat like the English Robin Hood. These pictures are striking because of the fiery red color that predominates, mingled with touches of blue.

These paintings although originally of foreign origin, nevertheless were so completely adapted to the spirit of the peasants, that in them the people expressed either the deepest religious devotion, or else made symbols, drawn from the heroic past of their national hero, Janosik, to encourage themselves in their darkest moments. But so beautiful were these paintings, that they were collected from the peasant homes and preserved in museums as invaluable and irreplaceable examples of popular art. Perhaps some of the most excellent ones that we have seen, are those kept in the Museum of Turcansky Svaty Martin.



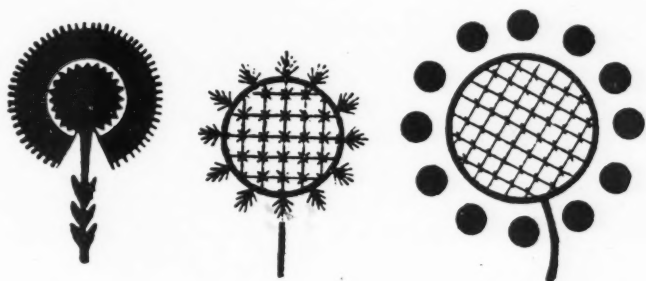
*Courtesy Brooklyn Museum*

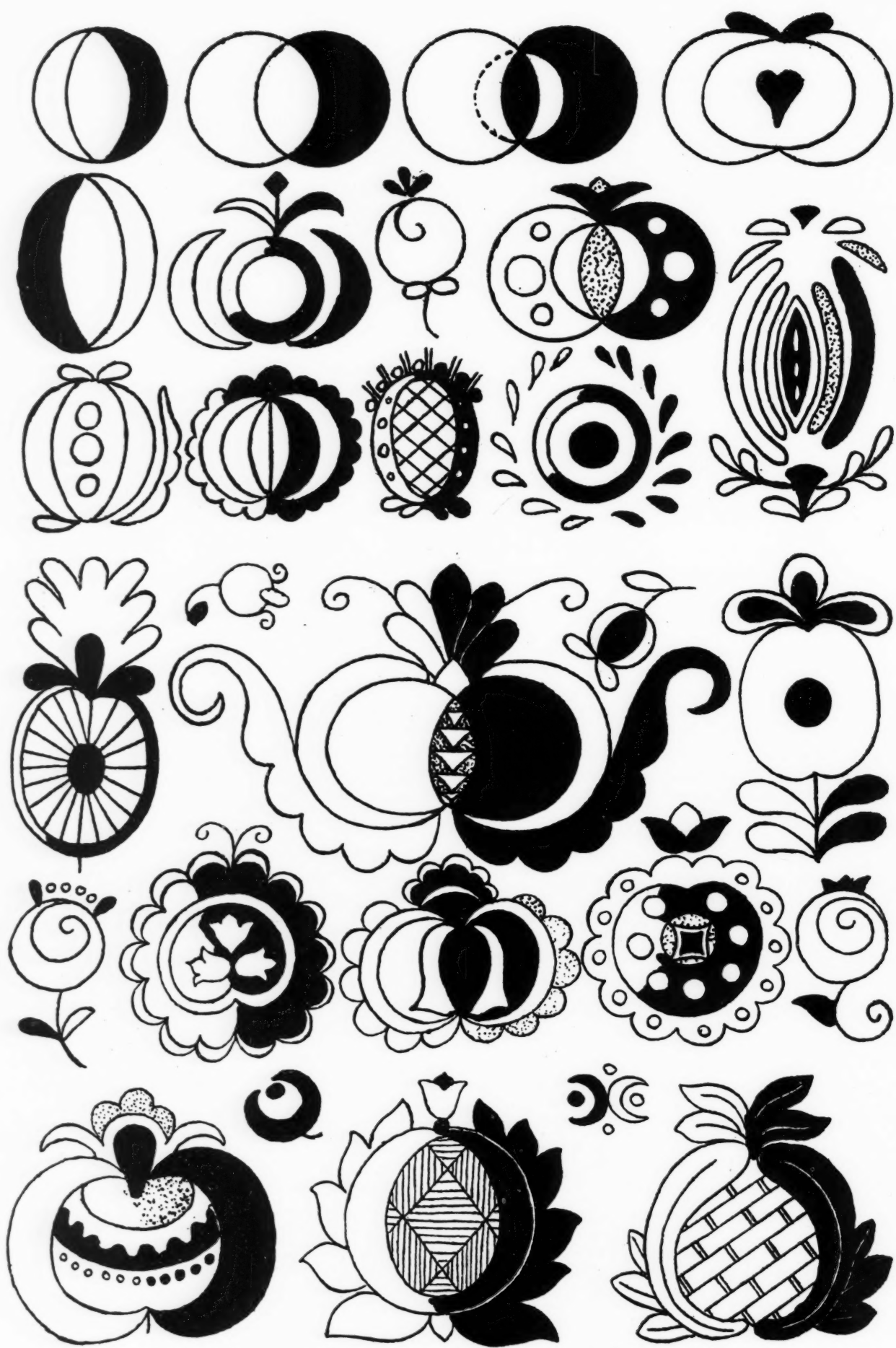
Haban Pitcher

## POPULAR ARCHITECTURE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*(Continued from Page 167)*

even the humblest cottage, the most ordinary utensils and the coarsest costume with an innate sense of color harmony." The architect, Dusan Jurkovic, has collected many fine examples of popular art in order not to allow it to die out entirely. He was particularly attracted to the ornamented architecture of the Slovaks, especially gables, fireplaces, furniture, kitchen utensils, as well as to the churches and the little roadside shrines.



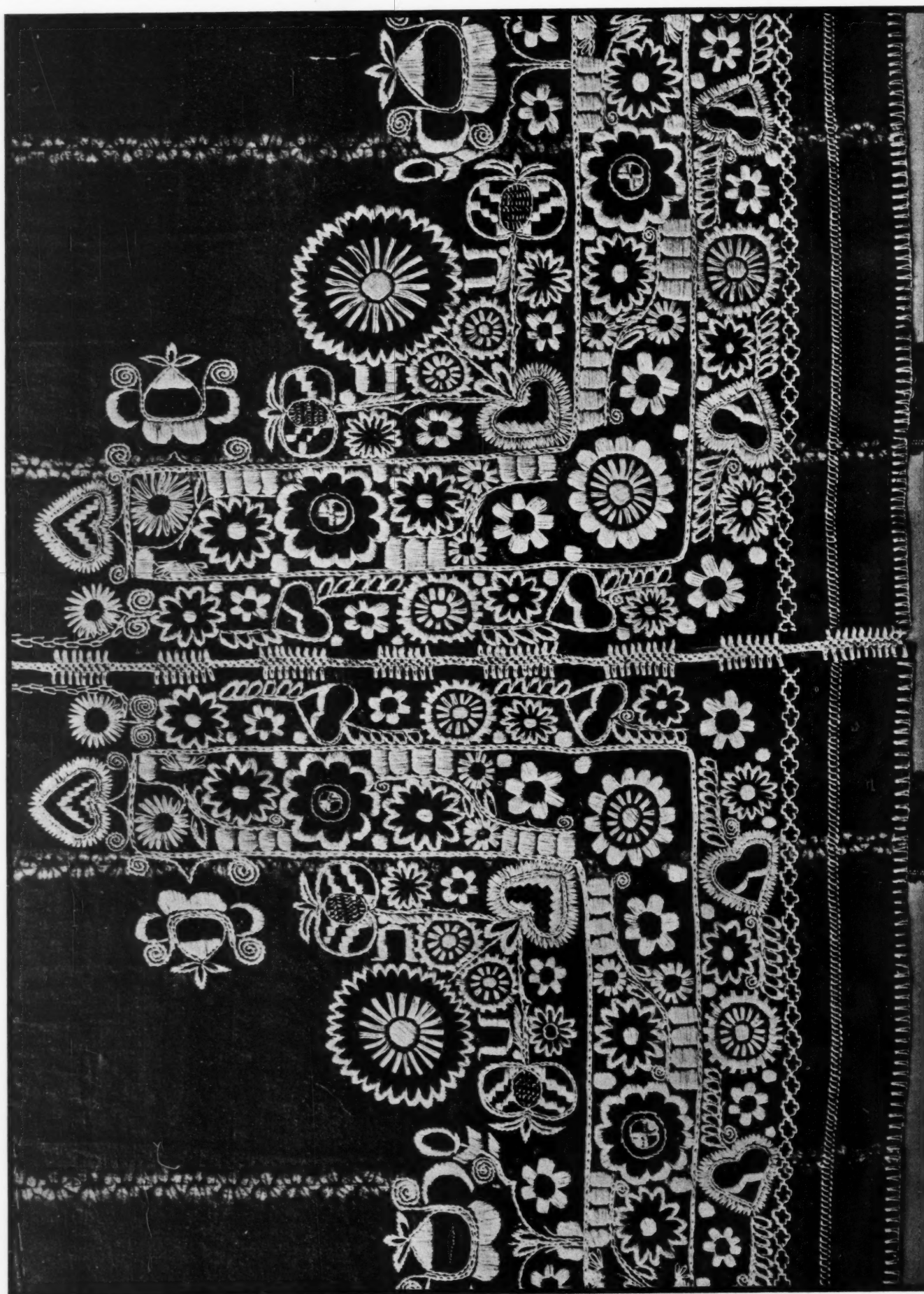


The development of designs from familiar plants, fruit and animal forms





Collection of fundamental motifs of Czech folk ornaments by Edward Weichert



*Reproduced from Vytvarna prace lidu nascho, Dusan Jurkovic*

Embroidered Apron from Kyjors showing the application of designs developed from simple plant forms as shown on other pages



## TEXTILE CRAFTS

EMBROIDERIES  
COSTUMES

Rose Kratina



IN Central Europe there are 2,500,000 souls, the greater percentage of which are Slovaks, defending their rights naturally, especially along the bordering towns. It is true that, because these sturdy souls have conquered the rough elements and lived through national uprising, they found consolation in their work. The country people, especially in the hills, took refuge in their own creative ability in embroidery. During the cold winter months when nature was resting they were forced in some way to occupy themselves. The woman took to the needle, wove coarse, even linen, and herself dyed the yarn, which resulted in incomparable colors. They created new stitches, new designs.

Czech, Moravian and Slovak designs have everlasting freshness and gaiety, for the reason that they sprang from the innermost longings of an undeveloped gift and the need of creation. It is because these women, as well as the men, do not possess artificial skill, but have a genuine feeling for design, that we can call the Czechoslovak peasant work Art. It is therefore impossible for an outsider to imitate the design or apply it properly. The peasant woman chose varied motifs for shawls, for kerchiefs, for skirts, corsets, bonnets and different ones for the interiors and pottery. In embroidering, she filled the corners, divided the large space and placed there hearts, rosettes, apples and carnations, then gradually filled the remaining spaces with leaves and spirals. The design is irregular but most interesting.

They took a special liking to combining silk, cotton and wool, employing the ravishing combination of red, green, white and magenta. At other times a blue background was covered with a design in yellow silk. Borders consisted of a wavy motif completed with small leaves and rosettes. Without calculation, the inspiration was accidentally derived from nature. Luxurious motifs were used for draperies, which served as partitions between the young mother's room and the living room. These were decorated with conventionalized cocks and doves or primitive figures of bride and groom. Embroideries were proportional to the wealth of the family. Some of the motifs were executed with red cotton on crash material, others more elaborate were embroidered with yellow silk combined with red and green silk and real gold thread. Each future bride made haste to finish a beautiful craft before the wedding. Interesting were the stripes embroidered in gay colored wool, which were put around the shoulder of the mother to lighten the burden of the child while carrying him in her arms.

Unusually well preserved are designs of the large squares which were thrown over the baby when carried to church for baptism. These squares are called "úvodnice" and are mostly made of a cotton material embroidered with cotton, wool, silk and in more wealthy families, silver and gold threads are also found. Three corners are filled with rich motifs and the sides scalloped or bordered with home-made pillow lace. Besides this, the woman embroidered squares all in white. The rosettes and hearts were filled with a spider web filler more complicated than can be im-

aged. How proud the Slovak mothers were of their daughters' dowery. All was of the home woven linen made to last forever. Skirts were hand pleated, adorned with smocking in special groupings of birds and rosettes. Some skirts bordered with embroidery around the bottom, others woven in many colors. Still others were pleated in black, but the principal piece of the costume was the apron. It was often bordered with a beautiful home-made lace or else it had an embroidered border of silk or of white cotton on a black apron. Of most interest are the aprons from Kyjov, the south of Moravia.

They are embroidered on black or dark blue linen usually two halves of the apron, connected in the front with the needle, but resembling very much a crochet stitch. For this purpose an unbleached cotton and a red worsted are employed. In the two center corners one finds motifs of hearts, rosettes and leaves in gorgeous and decorative colors. It is sad that more of the women did not appreciate their picturesque costumes and eagerly reached for the modern influence. The costumes of Bohemia, which were by far the richest, were among the first to vanish; skirts were of a heavy taffeta, the bodice of a silver and gold brocade, and the embroideries on the bonnet and apron were white, beautifully executed on a very fine net. Then gradually they died out in Moravia. The costumes of Slovakia survived the influence of the modern culture most successfully.

In Carpathia, where, so it is said, world is ending and mountains beginning in small villages, the original costume, dating back to five or six hundred years, can still be found. Even as the men, the women wear coats of homespun made by their own hands. The undergarments are of white, the men's in winter of homespun and in summer of unbleached linen; the women's all white of hemp and linen. The embroidery is poorer, but pure, with no foreign influence. In the valley we find richer and more elaborate coloring, very often coming across embroidery of silver and gold. The most beautiful of the costumes can now be seen in museums in Prague, Narodopisné Museum in Vienna, Bratislava and in all the smaller cities.

In the year 1860 the great painter, Joseph Manes, was attracted by the beauty of the peasant costumes and sketched the types of people. Since then the fever of collectors was aroused, and many private collections developed, preserving the innumerable precious pieces. In later years, Mikuláš Ales, imbedded himself through his sensitive drawings into the souls of the people. He felt with them and lived with them in his drawings. Both Manes and Ales created in the peasant spirit. Yet it is impossible to forget Kretz, who was the connoisseur, who we must thank for the preservation of the many, many museum pieces which otherwise would have been lost to us. It was he who gave little shiny trinkets in exchange for rare old cups or embroideries which the housewives gladly got rid of, not knowing that they were helping him build a marvelous collection. In his memoirs he said, "Efforts to modernize the peasant art according to the regulations of composition have always met with unfortunate results. Copy or crystalize, but don't modernize them."



*Courtesy Brooklyn Museum*

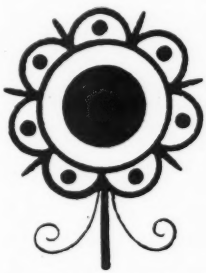
Haban Pottery. The pitchers at the top of the page show how the journeyman's trade was suggested in the decoration.





## CERAMICS

Lida Matulka



THE earliest examples of Czech ceramics that we possess are earthen vessels and burnt tiles which were glazed with a simple transparent lead glaze. The earthen vessels were made on the potters' wheel and were ornamented with straight or curved lines, and rows of decorative imprints. Probably not until the sixteenth century was a knowledge of enamel painted ceramics acquired through the influence of the Italian Renaissance. Czech ceramics clearly show this influence. Indeed, some of the works were undoubtedly made by the Italian masters themselves. How this was brought about can easily be explained: since at this time the majolic art was a secret guarded by the Italian craftsmen, the Czech nobles and princes invited the Italian masters of this art to Bohemia and asked them to teach the Czech artisans.

Majolica, it may be remembered, was a finer kind of ceramics, with an untransparent coating of lead or pewter on a white surface, and always richly decorated. It was probably of Arabian origin, for knowledge of this art had come to Italy from the Island of Majorca where, it is claimed, the Spanish Moors had introduced it. In the following paragraphs I shall try to describe briefly a few representative examples of Czech, Moravian and Slovakian ceramics. These three kinds of ceramics constitute, one may say, the ceramics of Czechoslovakia. In our museums, ceramics like embroideries, are classified and marked according to the sections of the country from which they proceed. However, the works are often extremely difficult to recognize and assign to any one particular place. Connoisseurs and curators have left many unidentified. The artisans in those early days were itinerants, and brought some of the technique of one section to another. Also, many pieces of pottery were entirely without signs or marks.

Czech ceramics are important, not so much because of their aesthetic merit, as because they preceded and consti-

tuted the basis from which the Moravian and Slovak ceramics developed. During the seventeenth century, Czech ceramics departed completely from the ornaments of the Italian Renaissance, and used as decorations their own conventionalized flowers. Beautiful tiles and pitchers, decorated with figured designs and painted with pewter clay of various colors, were made in the vicinity of Prague. On page 178, in the upper right-hand corner, is a reproduction of a plate, example of Ancient Czech Ceramics. This plate is decorated with four grape clusters, painted in green, and surrounded by a dark edging. Often there are also from three to five conventionalized flowers instead of grapes. The plate probably originated in Northeastern Bohemia. Another example of this Czech period is a dark blue plate "Jindřichův Hradec." It is decorated with engravings which bear the symbolical letters, "I. H. S." (See page 176, from *Talire české a uhersko-slovenské z XVIII-XIX stol.* (Plates of Bohemia and Hungarian Slovakia from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.) Whether these plates are from southeast Bohemia or from Vyskov in Moravia has not been definitely decided.

By the end of the eighteenth century the interest in Czech ceramics was declining. China porcelains and the painted faience of Holland were becoming popular with the better classes all over Europe. The domestic products attempted to combine the Czech spirit with foreign influence. At the close of the nineteenth century, porcelain ware had almost completely supplanted ceramics in the cities, while ceramics remained popular only with the peasant class. Its former high artistic standard was gradually lowered, until it was finally replaced by porcelain or "toufarove" ware. This was a sort of fine white stone ware, painted with roughly sketched flowers, landscapes, running deer and birds.

Ceramics in Moravia and Slovakia were not, with some slight exceptions, affected by foreign influence. Here, too, they were manufactured primarily, at first, for the guilds and city folk, and through these channels reached the peasants, who then gave them their own characteristic forms and decorations. Just as the peasant offered his own interpretation of flower motives or ornaments such as apples, grapes, hearts and tulips, which they embroidered on church vestments and altar cloths, and their national costumes, so in a similar way did they modify the form and ornamental motives which they used in ceramics. At this stage of the development in ceramics, we find in addition to the decorative motives mentioned above, both figures and animals used as ornaments. The most important ware of this kind in Moravia is that named "Vyskovská." The most common decoration of plates consists of wreaths in a wide border. Around these wreaths and in their center are beautiful compositions of flower and leaf clusters in yellow, blue-gray, and green. Another type of "Vyskovská" ceramics, of uncertain origin, resembles closely the Czech "Jindřichův Hradec" which I have already mentioned.

Slovak ceramics were produced under the Czech and Moravian influence. After the Battle of White Mountain, the Czech Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia betook themselves to exile to Slovakia, and brought with them the technique of ceramics. It was with them that the famous "Habanská" ceramics probably originated. The name is a curious one. The "Habans" were a group of Anabaptists who were exiled from Germany to Slovakia in 1546. To the Slovaks, the word "Anabaptists" was a new and strange term and thus by confusing the word, they came to call



them "Habans." The Habans had settled in Slovakia near the Moravian frontier and here they learned the ceramic technique from local artisans, and came to improve upon this art. The Habans themselves could not have introduced this technique from Germany, for at that time such advanced knowledge of ceramics did not exist in Germany. Yet this erroneous opinion is still held in foreign countries since so many Slovak wares bear German names and marks. The Habans, being of German origin, of course had German

other flowers with bright red predominating, surrounding figures painted in red and blue. Usually these figures represent the Virgin and Child, or some saint. I remember having visited during my travels the factory, where is made "Modrá" ware, another type of Slovak ceramics. It is still being made today. The manufacturers copy the old motifs, and try to produce these wares after the old style, but on a larger scale.

There were many such centers in Slovakia as those of



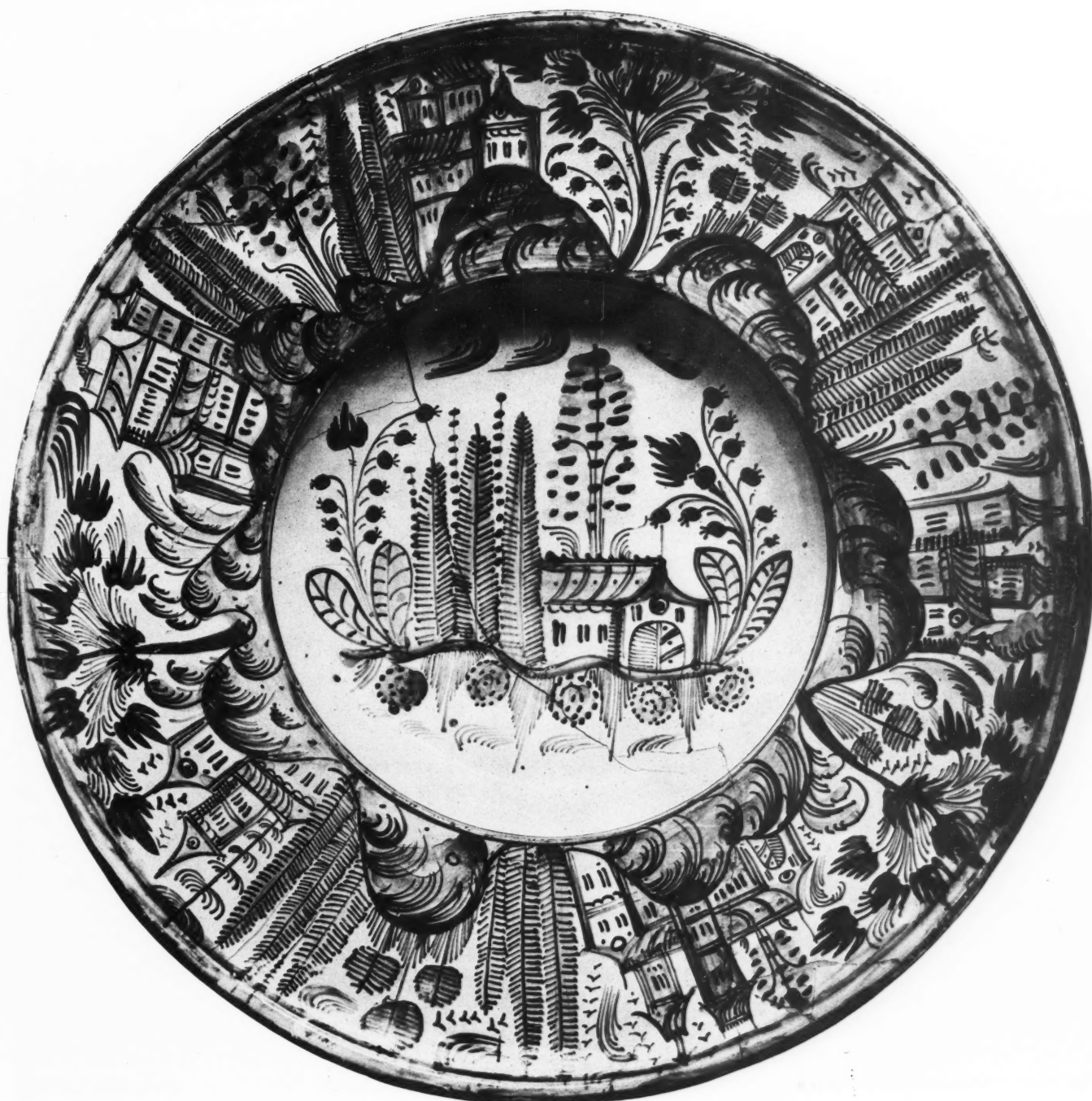
Czech and Slovak Plates from XVIII and XIX Centuries

*Taken from Styl, Vol. 1*

names, and since the products were usually marked with the place of origin, or with the name of the workman himself, this confusion could easily arise. Many instances of such confusion of German and Slovak ceramics have been brought to light by the Czech scholar, Professor Koula.

In Sobotište the chief examples of Haban ceramics were produced. The "Sobotište" products were famous for their beautiful bluish-white glaze, and for their form. The glaze used in the second half of the nineteenth century was yellow gold. It is said that the artisans kept adding gold, pewter, and other metals to it. The Slovak majolica of Dehtice and Dorrá Voda has a yellowish glaze. Another district of very well known ceramics is Boleráz. This pottery consists of pitchers on which are painted very gay wreaths of roses or

Boleráz, Dehtice, Sobotište, etc., already mentioned. However, ceramics were especially popular with the peasants. Very often from one hundred to one hundred fifty such pieces were found in a single little peasant cottage. But this ware did not appeal to the peasant alone. I visited a Czech professor of art who had a passion for collecting the peasant ceramics. He had collected over one hundred and fifty vessels, especially platters and jugs. These were called "Peasant Ceramics" in the first place because they were made by the humble peasant artists and were used and loved by the peasants, and secondly to distinguish them from "Holic" products manufactured in the factories of Holic. The factories were set up by the Austrian government as a means of perpetuating the knowledge of ceramics making



*Courtesy Brooklyn Museum*

Haban Plate

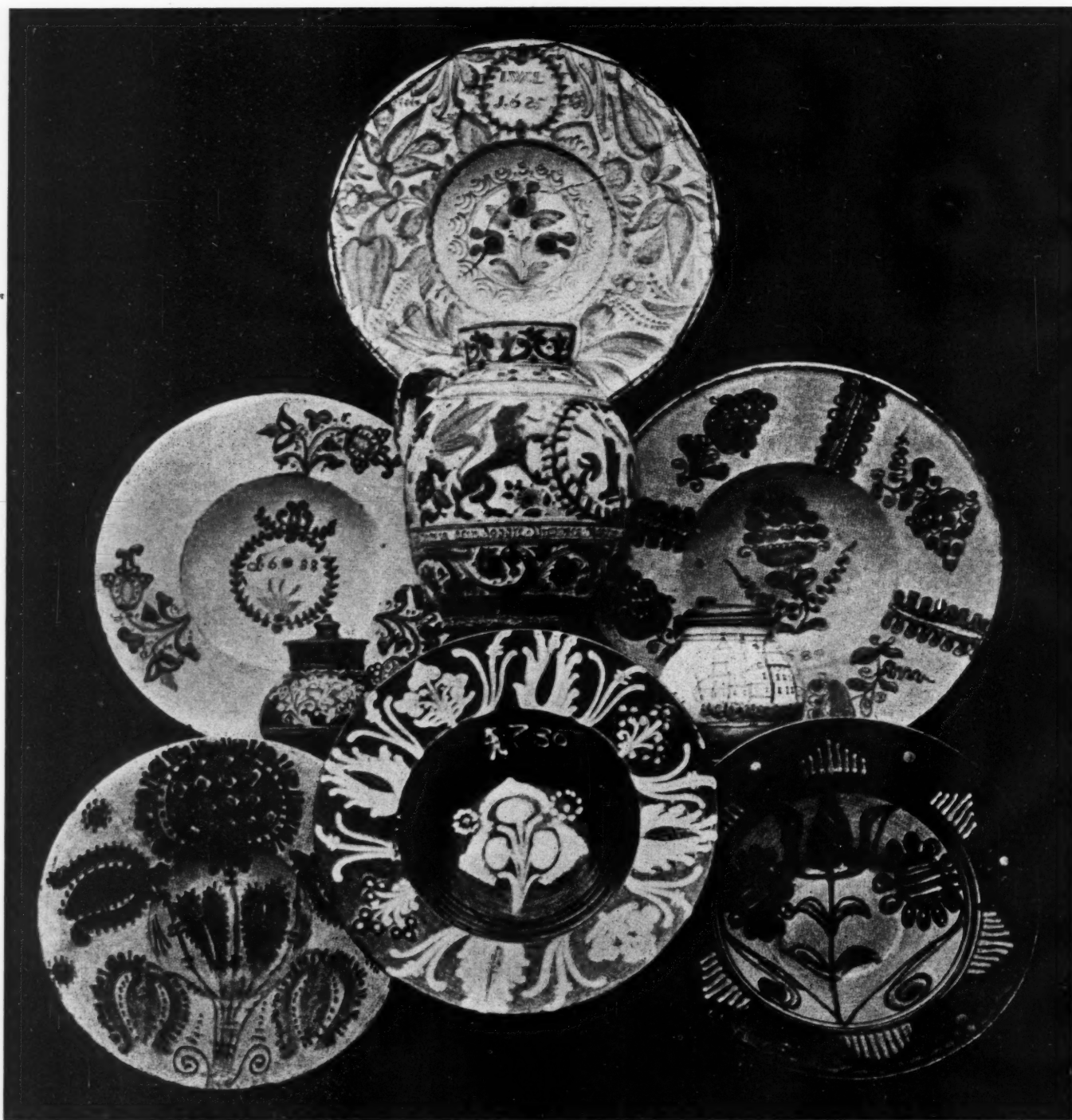
which the peasants possessed, and at the same time to afford the peasants a means of livelihood. "Holic," however, has never the fame that the real peasant ceramics had.

We have already seen that the wares were named after their place of production and frequently bore the initials of the maker and sometimes the trademark of a certain guild. A Moravian Pottery Guild had "Adam and Eve" as its trademark. Very often these marks with the dates were the only means of identification and when these were missing, recognition was extremely difficult.

Of the many vessels that still remain unidentified, is a very rare, beautiful plate. It has a decoration composed of

minute blossoms and leaves painted in grayish-green and white. (See the illustration on page 176, in the upper left-hand corner, XVIII-XIX century.) Just as ceramics from different localities in Slovakia can be recognized by their arrangement of ornament and design, so they can be distinguished by the color of the glaze. What makes the Slovak Majolica so rare is not only the beauty of its motifs and ornaments but its rich, brilliant colors and its technical perfection. The edging had to be executed with careful, sure and dexterous strokes since it could not be corrected. That this technical skill was truly remarkable only an artist or connoisseur can perhaps sufficiently appreciate.





*Reproduced from Narodopisna vystava ceskoslovanska*

Examples of the Old Czech Ceramics from the collections of the Ethnographical Museum in Czechoslovakia

In passing, mention must be made of the very beautiful journeymen pitchers, executed by journeymen, who in addition to their weekly wages, were permitted to bake one vessel of their own, along with that of their master. Into these dishes the journeymen often put all of their own time, skill and creative talent. It is unfortunate that so few of the ancient peasant works remain in the houses today.

Some of them have been removed to museums. Since 1895, the year of the Ethnographic Exposition at Prague, interest in Czech peasant art has been growing, and ornamented art objects are being bought up by the museums and also by private individuals. The demand has been especially great for embroideries and majolica, as these are also ideal subjects for decorative purposes.



## SOURCES OF HELP FOR TEACHERS OF ART

*An Introduction to Art Education* by William G. Whitford, with introduction by Paul Klapper. Published by D. Appleton & Co., 1929. 337 pp.

A resume of the situation of Art Education in America dealing with subject from numerous angles. Some of the twenty chapters center about such matters as: changing status of education; history of art education in America; modern tendencies in art education; survey of industrial and fine arts needs in American life; the school and its art needs; the course of study; terminology study of the federated council of art education; suggested art courses for elementary schools; plans for courses in secondary schools; art supervision, appreciation tests; research in art education. The book presents a highly formulated plan of curriculum making with numerous tables, graphs and scales, all of which present art as a standardized subject with definite classified lines of attack rather than a changing factor intimately related to individual lives. Formal ability tests with methods of scoring and tabulating individuals are emphasized. These, with the many plans presented in the book, suggest the author's aim as being to tabulate all phases of art education so that accepted principles and techniques may be definitely planned quickly and efficiently taught in a formal way to highly organized classes as contrasted with the point of view which emphasizes such factors as individual differences, art understanding and creative ability.

♦ ♦ ♦

**Czechoslovakian Art Exhibits and Reproductions** — A very rich source of particularly fine museum pieces of Czechoslovakian art, textiles, ceramics, costumes and furniture can be seen in the Brooklyn Museum. Due to limited space this material is not in the regular galleries but can be seen through the assistance of Miss Elizabeth Haynes who is in charge of that department.

The most notable collection in America of reproductions and illustrations of the popular arts of Czechoslovakia is to be found in the Czechoslovak Department of the Webster Branch of the New York Public Library in charge of Miss Z. Griffin. This includes a large number of books, bound volumes of magazines and many portfolios of various kinds.

*Art Education in the Elementary School* by Margaret Mathias, with an introduction by Bessie Lee Gambrill. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929. 178 pp.

The book states the problem as it presents itself in the third through the sixth grades of the public school, although much of it applies well to grades above and below these. The goal as stated is: ability in art expression; understanding and desire for beauty; a working knowledge of art structure; interest in contemporary and historical art. Towards accomplishing this the author discusses the psychological status of the child at various stages, particularly in its relation to such divisions of art education as drawing, design, color, lettering with its uses and art appreciation. In each of these classifications materials and techniques are challenged as to their values. Some ability tests are suggested; drawing is to be a form of expression rich in possibilities not disciplinary; perspective and art principles are means to an end, based on child psychology and sound art principles, giving much help but few devices. The author lays out a plan to produce sequence and growth. "Units of work" are based on normal interests and in such a way that a regard for art becomes a habit. The curriculum is ever changing and adjustable to individual needs.

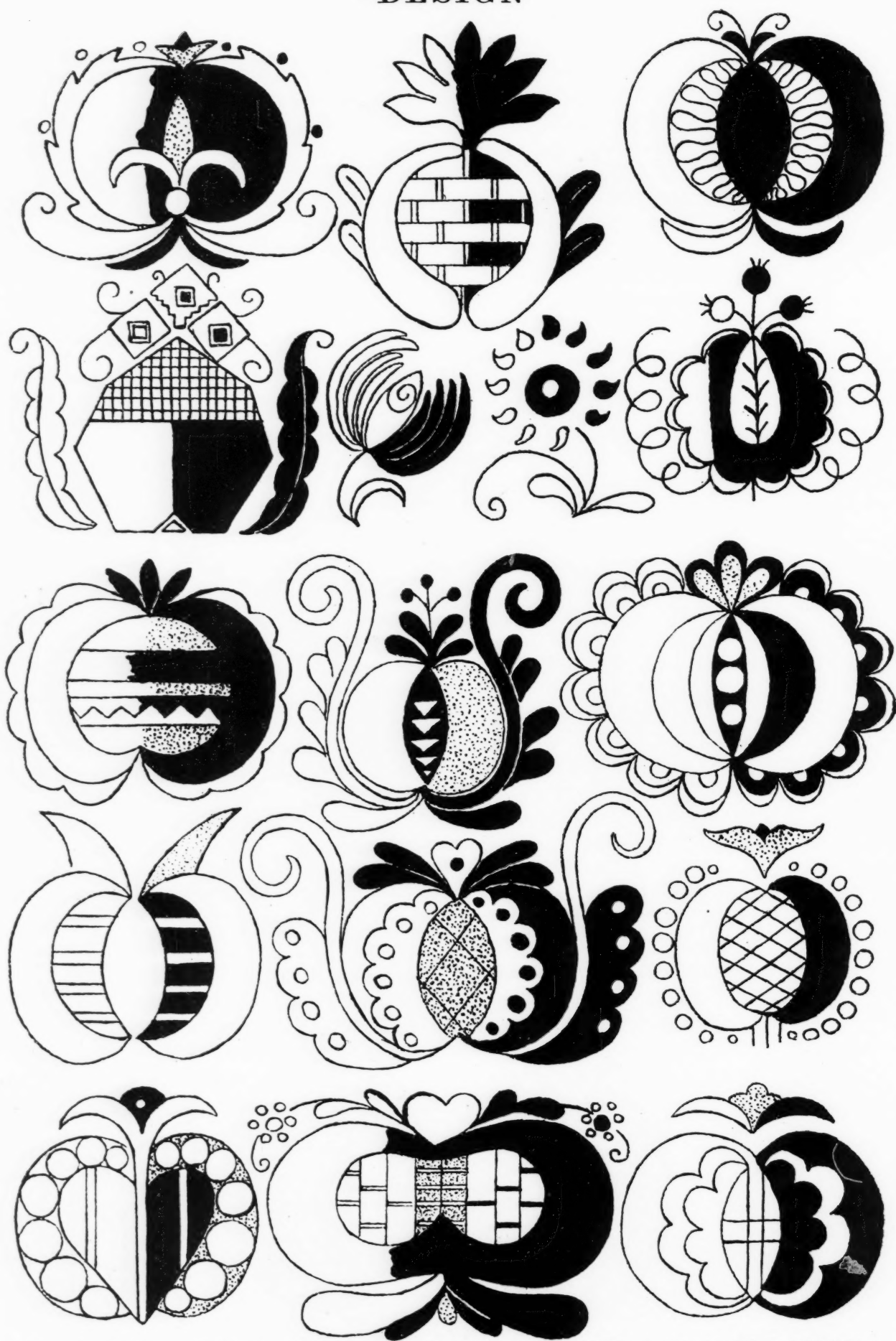
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*A Decorative Arts Collection* arranged by Felix Payant. 50 plates, 11"x14" in line, half tone and color. Published by Ceramic Studio Publishing Co., Syracuse, N. Y.

This material was planned to meet the needs of the progressive teachers of design and art appreciation, who are in need of more adequate illustrative material within easy reach. The fifty plates contain discriminating selections from museums, the work of leading contemporary designers, suggestions for students. They cover a wide range of subjects—textiles, ceramics, metal, costume, color, decorative landscape and figure. The large size of each plate, the heavy stock and selected titles make it possible to bring the best examples before the classes in a manner that is not only inspirational but at once practical and direct. An outstanding characteristic of this collection is its great variety of material and the almost indefinite number of class lessons to be developed from them. Many of the reproductions are large enough to be seen across a class room or studio which teachers will appreciate.



Decorated Easter Eggs



Reproduction from a Collection of Fundamental Motifs of Czech Folk Ornaments by Edward Weichert